(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to increase the wages of Indian textile workers?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) to (c) A news item carried by some of the news papers have quoted a study which has stated that the average wages of Indian workers in textile industry is $ 0.38 per hour as compared to $ 0.41 in Pakistan, $ 0.48 in Sri Lanka and $ 0.68 in China. However, a study titled "Cost benchmarking study-India *vis-a-vis* Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, China and Pakistan" got conducted by Cotton Textile Export Promotion Council has found that average wages of Indian workers during the period October, 2001 to March, 2002 was $ 0.50 per hour compared to $ 0.39 in Pakistan, $ 0.37 in Sri Lanka, $ 0.57 in China, $ 0.23 in Bangladesh and $ 0.34 in Indonesia. In the year 2003-2004, the export of textile and clothing were $ 13.2 billion.

Plight of Weaving Sector

1416. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn on the pathetic plight of the weaving sector and to the series of suicides by weavers due to their hardship and penury;

(b) if so, the State-wise details of total number of weavers suicide cases reported; and

(c) what are the measures taken to safeguard the weaving sector?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) and (b) Yes, sir. The Government has received a report from the Government of Andhra Pradesh about (13) thirteen suicidal deaths by handloom weavers due to various reasons in 11 districts of Andhra Pradesh. The reasons include financial hardships due to private debts, family problems, ill health etc. No. other state has reported any suicide by handloom weavers.

(c) Government of Andhra Pradesh have constituted an Expert Committee headed by the Hon'ble Minister of Finance, Government of

Andhra Pradesh to study the problems faced by weavers. The State Government have also informed that steps are proposed to be taken for assisting the weavers under PMRY, Artisan Credit Cards, Employment Generation Programme, Netha Bazaars, Weavers Housing Programme and Old Age Pension Scheme.

The Government of India is also implementing a number of schemes for the development of handloom sector and welfare of the handloom weavers. Assistance is being extended to State Governments and other implementing agencies under the Deen Dayal Hathkargha Prothsahan Yojana, Handloom Export Scheme, Marketing Promotion Programme, Design Development & Training Programme, Integrated Handloom Training Programme, Mill Gate Price Scheme, Workshed-cum-Housing Scheme, Weavers Welfare Scheme, Bunkar Bima Yojana, Implementation of Handloom (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act 1985 and 10% Rebate on Handloom products.

An amount of Rs. 154.56 crore has been provided under the Plan Schemes for the handloom sector in 2004-05, out of which an amount of Rs. 67.36 crore has been released as on 10.12.2004.

Revival of National Jute Manufacturers Corporation

1417. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the accumulated loss of National Jute Manufacturers Corporation since 2000;

(b) the reasons analysed for the loss; and

(c) the reasons why VRS is not being implemented/given to several willing workers and the steps taken for revival?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA):